



*"People
helping people
help
themselves"*

Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr., Governor
State of Indiana

Division of Mental Health and Addiction

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August 26, 2011

Marlene H. Dortch
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554
RE: Notice of Ex Parte Communication
WC Docket No. 07-271

Dear Ms. Dortch,

This letter is written to encourage the Federal Communications Commission to permanently reassign the three suicide prevention hotline numbers (1-800-SUICIDE, 1-888-SUICIDE, and 1-877-SUICIDA) to the Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). With SAMHSA managing all toll-free suicide prevention hotlines since 2007, community members in emotional distress or imminent risk of suicide have access to a reliable and dependable national crisis hotline system 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

As the State Mental Health and Substance Abuse Authority in Indiana, I am acutely aware that crisis hotlines are a critical public health safety net to Americans and it is important to have a reliable and dependable national crisis hotline system. Crisis centers are a core component of a comprehensive behavioral health system. Since its launch in January 2005, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline has routed over 44,000 calls from individuals in Indiana who are in emotional distress or suicidal crisis. Thanks to a partnership between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, veterans in our state are able to seamlessly access care through the VA by dialing 1-800-273-TALK and pressing one. Since the launch of this partnership in July 2007, over 7,000 veterans in our state have been able to reach out for help.

As a member of the Lifeline Standards, Trainings and Practices Subcommittee, I am confident that the Lifeline has an extensive backup system, which includes regional backup centers, as well as a national backup center, thereby ensuring that all calls are answered, even if the crisis centers in our state are beyond capacity. I hope that the FCC will permanently assign these numbers to SAMHSA, who have demonstrated the Lifeline to be a highly utilized and vital part of the Nation's safety net and are committed to the stability and accessibility of this valuable resource for individuals in crisis.

Sincerely,

Gina Eckart
Director
Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction